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WAMF ANNOUNCER'S MANUAL

Edited by M. Rubin '72

Announcing is the key to radio. The music you play may be excellent, but if the announcing between cuts is poor the whole show is tainted.

What you should aim for in the presentation of your material is a voice that sounds natural, pleasant, and friendly. However, you will find that what sounds natural in everyday speech tends to sound affected and unpleasing on the air. Announcing is like acting - it takes practise to sound "natural" on mike.

The following are hints that may help

1) PACING : First and foremost, watch your speed. The word is SLOW. All that your listeners have of you when you are on the air is your voice, and they must be able to understand what you are saying. The hardest words and phrases aren't impossible when you take them one at a time.

   Try saying the following phrases aloud at what you consider your normal speed:

   a) She sells sea shells by the sea shore
   b) Wobbly Willy wheeled and dealed while waggishly wondering why: what was it all about.
   c) You yellowish yellow yarrow-seed, you.
   d) Slippery, slobbery, slimey, silly, and slushy.
   e) Moaning, mimicking, masticating, and monstrously maniacal.
   f) The gibbering gibbon glared, gnawed nonchalantly, gnashed its teeth, then vanished.
   g) Steve seeks second spot for second consecutive semester.

   Now, go through them again at a speed slow enough to enable you to pronounce each word clearly and distinctly. Go slowly and you shouldn't have any difficulty.

2) CLEARNESS in your speech is a must on radio. The most common cause of sloppy speech is the dropping of final consonants. Pronounce them.

NOT THIS	BUT THIS
Sattaday	Saturday
Feberary	February
Lorjeff	Lord Jeff
Probly	Probably
Percip'tation	Precipitation
Am-herst	Am'erst
Nooz	New s (nyews)
Toozday	Tuesday (Tyuesday)
Tooned	Tuned (tyuned)
* W (dubbya)	Double-you (there is an 'L' in this)

You get the point. Every slurred, missed syllable and maimed consonant sounds sloppy. Don't be afraid to open your mouth. Don't hesitate to move your tongue. On the other hand, over-emphasized, super-distinct and precise speech sounds affected. Pronounce your words carefully but don't overdo it - strike a medium but lean towards precision.

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The following are hints that may help:

1) PACING : Plant and forecast, watch your speed. The word is SLOW. All that your listeners have of you when you are on the air is your voice, and they must be able to understand what you are saying. The hardest words and phrases aren't impossible when you take them one at a time.

Try saying the following phrases aloud at what you consider your normal speed:

a) She sells sea shells by the sea shore
b) Wobbly Willy wheeled and dealed while wearingly wondering why what was it all about.
c) Ten yellowish yellow yarrow-seed, you.
d) Slippery, slobbery, slimy, silly, and slowly.
e) Mounting, mulching, mastication, and monstrously mutinous.
f) The gibbering gibbon glared, grained nonchalantly, greased the teeth, then vanished.
g) Steve seeks second spot for second consecutive semester.

Now, go through them again at a speed slow enough to enable you to pronounce each word clearly and distinctly. Go slowly and you shouldn't have any difficulty.

2) CLARITY in your speech is a must on radio. The most common cause of sloppy speech is the dropping of final consonants. Pronounce them.

NOT THIS	BUT THIS
Saddeday	Saturday
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Ior-jeff	Lord Jeff
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* W (dubya)	Double-you (there is an "L" in this)

You get the point. Every slurred, blend syllable and mutted consonant sounds sloppy. Don't be afraid to open your mouth. Don't hesitate to move your tongue. On the other hand, over-emphasized, super-distinct and precise speech sounds affected. Pronounce your words carefully but don't overdo it - strike a medium but lean towards precision.

3) PRONOUNCIATION: Get it right the first time. In a community like ours there is always someone who knows the correct way the word should be pronounced and who will not be amused if you do not. If you are unsure how a word should be said use a dictionary or check with someone else. Just remember, when in doubt how to say it, don't.

4) NASALITY is a definite no-no. Sound like a radio announcer, not a telephone operator. Try pinching your nose and speaking aloud for a while. If you 'buzz' on anything except m's and n's then you're speaking nasally. Use your vocal cords, not your nose. Sit up straight, breathe deeply and properly, and project - don't let the sounds get all mushed up in your mouth.

Speaking from your diaphragm eliminates nasal sounds and adds resonance and depth to your voice. (If you don't know what speaking from your diaphragm is or how it's done, have someone who has had training in speech or vocal music to help you out)

5) STYLE : In most cases certain types of shows demand a certain style from the announcer. Here are some examples of situations and their commonly accepted styles:

a) NEWS : Clear and distinct. Sound as if you know what you're talking about. Read that copy in advance so you won't trip up on the air.
b) CLASSICAL MUSIC: Speak very clearly and very distinctly - don't rush it. Take reasonable pauses between the announcing and the music. Correct pronounciation is a necessity.
c) LIGHT ROCK, JAZZ, AND FOLK : Relaxed, friendly, personable. Announce each cut and artist.
d) TOP 40 : Fast and tight (i.e. no pauses or dead air)...be 'up.'
e) ROCK: Know your music. Play lots of it. Keep talk to a minimum.

But, regardless of the style of the show, you come across best when you're yourself. Don't be afraid to be you. Trying to be something you're not sounds phony and loses listeners.

Nothing helps you sound better, more personable, more friendly, and more relaxed than a well placed smile. Even if you feel like a fool, grin into that mike for all its worth. No joke - it really works.

6) AD-LIBBING: Most of what you do in the way of announcing is ad-lib. There's no time to rehearse or write down what you're going to say, yet you must sound coherent and unhurried. Try this:

Ad-lib for one minute about your immediate surroundings. Describe them in glowing technicolor. Make it exactly 60 seconds.

That isn't too hard, but you probably did one of the following:
a)Groped for words and said "uh-" while groping
b) Tripped over a phrase because you were going too fast.
c) Sped up at the end when you realized that your time was almost up.

Now try it again - for exactly 60 seconds describe Johnson Chapel. However, this time, try it more slowly, anticipate your closing time and reach it gracefully. Above all, don't say "uh-". When you're not sure what to say, say nothing. Then, when you know where you're going, open your mouth again.

If you can now ad-lib without "uh"s and "you know"s and can work your way carefully through a series of difficult sentences in a specified amount of time, congratulations.

3) ACKNOWLEDGMENT: Get it right the first time. In a community like ours there are many sources who know the answers very the word should be pronounced and people who will not be amused if you do not. If you are unsure, ask a word should be said (at a dictionary or check with someone else. Just remember, when in doubt how to say it, don't.

4) PLACEBO: is a definite no-no. Sound like a radio announcer, not a telephone operator. Try placing your mouth and speaking aloud for a while. If you 'come' on anything except n's and m's then you're speaking nasally. Use your vocal cords, not your nose. Sit up straight, breathe deeply and properly, and project - don't let the sounds get all muddled up in your mouth.

Speaking from your diaphragm eliminates nasal sounds and adds resonance and depth to your voice. (If you don't know what speaking from your diaphragm is or how it's done, here's someone who has had breaking in speech or vocal music to help you out)

5) STYLE : In most cases certain types of shows demand a certain style from the announcer. Here are some examples of situations and their commonly accepted styles.

a) DRIVE : Clear and distinct. Sound as if you know what you're talking about. Read that copy in advance so you know what you're talking about. Speak slightly faster than normal, but very distinctly and very emphatically - don't rush it. This recommendable pause between the announcing and the music. Correct pronunciation is a necessity.

b) LIGHT ROCK, DISC AND TOUR : Relaxed, friendly, personable, announce each cut and artist.

d) TOP 40 : Fast and tight (i.e. no pauses or dead air)...be "up."

e) AUDIO: Know your music. Play lots of it. Keep talk to a minimum.

But, regardless of the style of the show, you can succeed best when you're yourself. Don't be afraid to be you. Trying to be something you're not sounds phony and loses impact.

Nothing makes you sound better, more personable, more friendly, and more relaxed than a well placed smile. Even if you feel like a fool, grin high than mile for all the world. Do this - it really works.

6) AD-LIBBING: Most of what you do in the way of announcing is ad-lib. There's no time to relax or write down what you're going to say. Yet you want sound convincing and informed. Try this:

Ad-lib for one minute about your immediate surroundings. Describe them in glowing exclamations. Make it exactly 60 seconds.

That isn't too hard, but you probably did one of the following:

a) Dropped for words and said "uh-" quite profuse
b) Tripped over a phrase because you were going too fast.
c) Sped up at the end as when you realized that your time was almost up.

Now try it again - for exactly 60 seconds describe Johnson Chapel. However, "pretend" you're here for the "first time". The usual sense lack of glory generality. Here it, don't say "uh-". When you're not sure what to say, say nothing. Then, when you know where you're going, open your mouth again.

If you can now ad-lib without "uh"s and "you know"s and can work your way smoothly through a series of difficult sentences in a specified course of time, congratulations.

One final reminder:

Empathize with your audience. If you don't come across to them they'll turn you off. Be friendly, be <u>you</u>.

* * *

The voice test will consist of:

1) Ad-libbing for exactly 10, 30, and 60 seconds
2) Giving a legal ID
3) Reading news (you'll get a chance to see the copy in advance and go over it)
4) Reading cold copy (something you have not seen before)

It's remarkably easy and no one should have any difficulty with it. Just follow the guidelines, practice a bit in advance, and keep calm - you should have no trouble at all.

Good Luck.

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